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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the idea that writing and reading, the creation and interpretation of text, provide a model for the study of teacher education and research. It examines the development of one teacher educator who creates a community of third- and first-person voices through the re-examination of one of his published papers. Reflective writing and dialoguing with others are seen as helping individuals become more aware of their life histories and the influences that have shaped their thinking. Self-reflexive and reflective writing complements one's published, formal writing to produce a series of both academic and personal voices that go beyond existing levels of development. Reflective writing strategies are felt to serve the educational function of transformation of perspective. Gaining perspective on self and becoming aware of the possibilities that are within and without bring individuals closer to melding their authentic voices. In this way, it is proposed that teacher education can be refigured as inquiry through self-research. (Contains 25 references.) (JDD)

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ED 362 473

WRITING TO RECLAIM SELF:
THE USE OF NARRATIVE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Authoring provides a powerful paradigm for teacher education. Following the "objective introverted" example of Pessoa, I am exploring the development of my own voices as an expanding community of selves. Voice is an action based construct, especially relevant to the struggle for representation in which the third person, academic voice is usually preferred to that of the first person self. Autoethnography helps reclaim this previously marginalized aspect of self by making it our central text. I revisit one of my published papers to provide second thoughts about it and myself. By embracing the interplay of contrary voices, I am learning both to still my over-dominant professor voice and to speak for myself. Writing a narrative text helps in the construction of a new community of selves which can be taken beyond existing levels of development. Teacher education can be refigured as inquiry through self-research.

The Development of Many Voices In One

Fernando Pessoa consistently studied the development of his voices as his central text. Although he spent his daily life translating the foreign correspondence of others, he is acknowledged as Portugal's major twentieth-century writer and as its greatest representative of modern sensibility and thought. Pessoa (1991) explained:

> I unravel like a multicolored skein.... I make yarn figures out of myself.... Living is knitting according to the intentions of others. But as we do it, our thoughts are free and all the enchanted princes can stroll through their parks between the instants when the hooked ivory needle sinks into the yarn. (p. 7)

Day, Pope, and Denicolo (1990) have called for efforts to refigure teacher education and research so that teaching lives can be represented in authentic ways and so that research can become concerned "with the nature, formation and use of teachers' knowledge--(with) the construction, reconstruction and reorganisation of experience which adds to its meaning" (p. 2). Teacher voice is now widely acknowledged as a promising, action oriented concept (Day, 1991; Britzman, in press) in such research. Bakhtin (1981, p. 434) described voice as the "speaking

personality (or) speaking consciousness." Britzman (in press) similarly depicts voice as:

> Meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community.... The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all a part of this process.... Voice suggests relationships.

As a teacher educator and researcher, I am trying to reclaim my personal voice by becoming a more visible and self-aware author. By becoming more self-consciously reflexive in my writing and by accepting the inevitable partiality and constructedness of all writing, I hope to promote my further development as a teacher and researcher. Writing helps to distinguish between our different voices. It also makes aspects of the self become more audible and possible. Such fuller realization of individual intention and even transformation of perspective can be accomplished through the uses of narrative (Diamond, 1991).

Like Elizabeth Smart in her poetic fiction, teachers and researchers may feel that, as people, they always remain "the marginal notes, never the text" (Sullivan, 1991, p. 231). The "frozen seas" of the personal are an important but neglected part of the range of possibility in teacher education. Such a voice has been previously suspected in academic writing as unreliable, illegitimate, and even trivial. The personal has largely been

discounted as "outside of, and inferior to distanced, neutral and measured ... public academic discourse" (Jones, 1990, p. 3). However, narrative forms of writing can be used both to interrupt traditional academic discourse and to explore positioning and reflexivity.

As writers, we can enter conversation with others and with ourselves. Even as the academic community and its networks are organized by written discourse (papers, articles, reviews, and books), so too each of us consists of an interpretive community of selves made up of our overlapping public and personal voices. Each voice constitutes another perspective or "way of seeing and knowing" in the "hall of mirrors" (Shulman, 1991, p. 394). Each aspect of the self constructs and apprehends its own interpretation of reality and then writes a very different version of it. Since each voice provides a further opportunity for structuring and restructuring experience, the more codes that we can master the richer and the more varied will be our development. Elbow (1986) encourages us to embrace such contraries in an internal dialectic that may lead eventually to "new and larger frames of reference" (p. 251). The unfolding of personal knowledge through professional narratives can result in our "wandering into insights" (p. 180).

The discourse of teacher education has previously consisted largely of the imposed language of public scholarship. To paraphrase Pessoa (1991, p. 7), writing for academic publication has usually been like "knitting according to the intentions of others." In contrast, personal writing can provide for the

language of adventure, self-exploration and growth. If much previous writing in teacher education has disconnected us from our own lives and subjectivity, a community of voices offers a metaphor for exploring the interplay of both kinds of authorship and of texts.

If more space is opened up for the display of awareness of different aspects of self, teacher education may be refined and eventually redefined as a field of study. Narrative provides an autobiographical opportunity for us each to gain a distinctive presence or series of registers within which we can explore the bipolarity of our first and third person voices, that is, of our private and public, fictitious and factual selves. Our presence is established when our thoughts and feelings are called forth by and in community. The development of the self and its different levels of consciousness takes place both intra- and inter-personally. Narrative helps us name the structured quality of our experience and it also names the pattern of the inquiry. Narrative is "both phenomenon and method" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.2).

Narrative and Voice

Growing up in the Portugese consulate in Durban, South Africa, Pessoa spoke and wrote English at school and on the street, and Portugese at home, while studying French which he came to write fluently. He later described himself as playing many people in the one person. He sought to find his real self with all

his multiplicity intact. He can accordingly be characterized as an "objective introvert" (Pessoa, 1988, p.9).

Pessoa accepted his dividedness so completely that he wrote poems not only under his own name but also under those of three other acclaimed poets. Paradoxically, he set himself free by exploring his self in terms of these other three voices, each with its own personal thoughts and feelings. In Pessoa's (1991) prose diary, *The book of disquiet*, he added yet another alter ego to his gallery of multiple personalities. He persistently transformed himself into a complex set of written possibilities. Even as a child, he held long dialogues with imaginary people, creating a pen pal to write to, one who also wrote back.

Discourse offers teacher education a powerful paradigm. Like Vygotsky, Luria, and Bakhtin, Pessoa construed life as authoring. In this literary tradition, the individual is seen primarily as a narrativist, an author-reader (Kozulin, 1991). The reality of Pessoa's words and fictions so enlarged his sense of daily unreality that he saw himself as a character taken from fiction, or as no one. Even his name means 'persona' or mask. However, dying before age fifty, Pessoa (1991: xiii) wrote:

> What we are
> Cannot be transfused into word or book....
> However much we give our thoughts the will
> To be our soul and gesture it abroad
> Our hearts are incommunicable still....
> The abyss from soul to soul cannot be bridged.

Since words provide the major vehicle of thought, Pessoa felt that we are sentenced to be alienated even from ourselves by the very means that we use to try to understand ourselves. And yet, despite his pessimism about the outcome of the struggle, words present our best means for sorting out and organizing our worlds. Words help us to gain some purchase on our constructive processes. To expand these kinds of possibilities, we need to learn the language of our different selves, of at least our first and third persons, and so become "multicultural" objective introverts.

In many teacher education programs, the existence and legitimacy of teachers' words and knowledge seem rarely acknowledged. And yet, autoethnography or self-narrative practices, with their storying and restorying, can help us as teachers to reclaim and expand our selves. Reflective inquiry can promote the individual and shared transformation of personal and social stories that Connelly and Clandinin (1991) call an "awakening" form of teacher education. I am similarly exploring development as the successive perspective transformation that results from gaining access to our own and alternative vantage points from which to view (or through which to voice) different interpretations of teaching and research (Diamond, 1992). In the reflective narrative that follows, I make figures out of my first and third person selves so as to restructure and elaborate my understandings-- but not in isolation from others.

The Construction processes of My Own Narrative

Whenever we write and publish as academics, we run the risk of having our voices either muffled or silenced and impersonated. Our experiencing, immediate first person self is easily supplanted by the observing, controlling third person. I experienced such a "relapse" while writing a case description of my agenda as a teacher educator who was learning to lecture less often (Diamond, 1988). Feminist scholars such as Monteath (in progress) describe such loss or depersonalization of the witnessing "I" as a split in the self.

In a 1988 paper, I depicted my teaching and research development as if I were one of Kelly's (1955) personal scientists, rationally construing my practice, predicting future action and weighing up the likely consequences. However, what I had originally intended as an emancipatory incursion into self-storying quickly collapsed into a retreat from personal exploration. I sought instead the safety of a third person, academic conceptualization derived from developmental theory. I depicted the contours of my journey as consisting of five phases: pre-conjectural, dogmatic, decision-making, inventive or conjectural, and emancipatory.

Despite describing growth of mind as a shift from rationalist abstraction to disciplined intuition, that is, from third to first person voice, I ironically allowed professional misgivings and the imagined readings of critical others to crowd out my more personal concerns. What could have been narrative and expressive became

more acceptably controlled and expository. Percept, concrete experience, practice, and fragmentary story all yielded to concept, abstract representation, theory, and to ascent by stages. I had not learned to quiet my too theoretical voice and, as the present paper shows, I am still seeking more authentic "symmetry in communication" (Diamond, 1988, p. 139) between my voices. The over-dominant professor-self still tries to sink 'the needle into the yarn" (Pessoa, 1991, p. 7). However, I am learning that the interplay of both my voices, personal and critical, is necessary for development.

When the editor of the journal suggested changing my 1988 title from "Confessions of an ex-educational lecturer" to "Construing a career: A developmental view of teacher education and the teacher educator," I accepted the more generalized version as a scholarly improvement. I acquiesced in being partly ventriloquated, again voicing the intentions of others by adopting their language. I have since begun to wonder if there is any voice in my academic writing that remains my own. My reticence to "go public" with the personal is shown by the use of colons in nearly all my published titles. I link my first person, poetic statements with third person, more general descriptions. Being uneasy about the status of subjective statements, I seek their legitimation through association with more logical propositions. The result is that I remain less present to myself. The use of narrative and sympathetic readers may help me to reclaim and declare myself.

Reflections and Second Thoughts

The paradox of being a person and teacher-researcher may be resolved by addressing these different roles as aspects of self in community. Both third and first person voices need to be explored as members of the same interpretive confederation of selves, one that is always evolving or emerging. But why is it so difficult to inquire into and write about our own practice? Clark (1991) calls it "coming in from the cold." To reconcile some of the tensions between my professional and personal perspectives and to allow for each to become present to the other, I reconsidered my 1988 paper as below and provide second thoughts about it. Writing my own diary of disquiet may help me to recover and redefine what my intentions and practices mean.

In my reflections, I am trying to feature aspects of my more personal voice that may have been present in 1988, only to be silenced within the published paper. On one level, this split or dissociation may show the limitations of language and writing. On another, it may be that it is only now, years later, through the distance of intervening time and ensuing personal growth, that I can voice differences or gains in self. Much like the responses of Pessoa's pen pal, the insights of reviewers and of other researchers may have enticed me forward and contributed to my development. Dialogic approaches help me to entertain different versions of myself and to consider which are the more important and when.

I reread my 1988 paper as an opportunity to reconstrue my construction processes. Its introduction and some of the concluding remarks now seem a little hortatory. My voice seems firmer and more compelling when I concentrate on my actual experience as, for example, when I admit, as a beginning lecturer in curriculum, to adopting the self-satisfied pose of a master teacher cloning willing pre-service apprentices. I confessed to removing the fourth wall of my then recent real-life classroom and so invoking my "successes" as to shame the novice teachers into adopting my version of innovative practices. I offered them my recipes for reactive learners.

I now wonder why some of the expressions and the appropriations in the paper (such as "academic cargo cult, immaculate perception," and "learning as theory formulation") seem mildly accusatory. While something borrowed can be something true, the thirty-three citations show such an over-reliance on the voices of others that my own was in danger of being suppressed. Writing for publication can pose a threat, even if only self-imposed, to maintaining an authentic stance. This is a neglected issue in the struggle for position and representation.

My 1988 use of the "portray-betray" contrast is elaborated in a 1992 paper, "Accounting for our own accounts: Auto-ethnographic approaches to teacher voice and vision." Here I discuss the omission of the voices of teachers and of teacher educators from much of the previous literature and educational debate. If the neglect in the first instance seems tantamount to the suppression of voice, in the second it seems that teacher

educators' voices have even been privileged and even protected. But that may be too dramatic.

While the literature has been quiet on the topic of teacher educators, some ethnographers may be depicted even more conspiratorially as having penetrated "deep forests" to gather and sift the remnants of so-called "primitive" societies that are constituted by classroom teachers. Such attempts resemble invasive sorties into occupied territory with opposing forces competing for limited supplies of power and authority. Relatively fewer incursions have been made, however, to disturb the intimacy of life among tribes nearer to hand. The tribes of powerful educational researchers and their published ethnographies of the classroom practices of others could of course be referred to. While I do not suggest an attitude either of colonization or of indifference, it is time for the researchers to become the researched.

My interpretation of my teaching and research processes is still summed up and given meaning by several of the other bipolarities that I used in 1988. These include: "private-public, personal-professional, cognition-affect, relevance-rigour, metaphor-model, participation-detachment, learning-lecturing," and "cooperation-competition." In each case, the two poles provide an underlying dimension of appraisal and, when fielded respectively against each other, they can yield unexpected relations. For example, as teacher educators we may feel guilty for dedicating time to research, whether into other teachers' practices or into our own. We may feel that we have to choose between either

teaching or scholarship. While commitment to both service and research may court fragmentation, time spent thinking and writing (that is, doing research) may prove to be of great benefit to our teacher students and to ourselves.

Doing research and publishing in scholarly journals can be reconstrued not as a selfish activity but as an opportunity to grow in strength as teacher advocates. When research and teaching are conceived of as complementary rather than as competing activities, teaching can be seen as a form of research and research as a form of teaching. The two activities can be integrated conceptually into a reflective and reflexive practice. Through further writing and stepping back from the 1988 paper, I hope that I may have advanced, like some of Holly's (1989, p. 7) teachers, "from a protective to an exploratory position regarding inquiry (into my) teaching."

The problems of developing as a teacher-researcher and also personally stem from the difficulties that each of us faces as we constitute what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe as a developing and multiple "I." Just as Pessoa (1991) explored himself as a "multi-colored skein," I am still sorting out which of my voices is the over-bearing, silencing one and when the other more tentative voices need to take their turn to be heard. My third person voice may need to express itself less as a didactic critic and more as an encouraging collaborator. Further conversation with self and others is needed to help me invent fresh dualities so that I can continue to reappraise my teaching in a fresh register and from another perspective.

I now wonder about some of the silences in the 1988 paper. For example, I did not discuss how other education faculty and friends reacted to my career shift from pre-service curriculum and instruction to graduate thesis supervision and the foundations. Did some feel that publication was a form of immodesty? I also did not consider the gains (and losses) in graduating from mass lectures with beginning teachers to small in-service seminars with experienced teacher colleagues. The difficulties that inevitably face the alienated individual help explain why some critics are so pessimistic about the possibility of educational reform-- and even of self-renewal. However, I believe that only teachers can change schools and only by understanding themselves and their classrooms first.

Even so, we still need others to hold up a collective mirror to provoke our further development. Construing self as a confederation of voices allows us to emphasize both individualism and collectivism. Professional isolation can be overcome without succumbing to self-centredness or conformity. Rather than separating development from the settings in which it takes place, we can seek growth of self in community, that is, through the dialogue of our third and first person voices, of self and others.

There are other gaps in my 1988 paper about how, as academics, we go about enhancing our own prospects for promotion. Bateson (1990, p. 181) laments that pressure almost compels us to publish in "isolated driblets" to lengthen if not strengthen our resumes. This may mean that we settle for known landfalls rather than searching for personal growth. I wonder now about my

experiences of completing a thesis, part-time over six years. I wrote coolly of "pursuing doctoral research" without reference to any of the pitfalls. While giving more adequate expression to the personal quality of knowledge is never easy, it surely grows when shared.

I feel that it is time for me to develop further some of my themes that were emerging in 1988. I need to write using paragraph completions such as: "What I had not understood ...;" "As a learner, I ...;" and "My further development...." Another of my previous bipolarities raises the possibility of seeing teachers as researchers and vice versa. I have begun to explore transformation as consisting of building and rebuilding our explanations of how classrooms and research work. Development can consist of our reclaiming voice and remodelling perspective.

Discussion

The metaphors of community, voice and vision help conceptualize how we come to know (and not know) in teacher education. Even as these constructs provide purchase on the self and others, I am trying to depict my development in terms of finding room for both my first and third person voices within my transforming community of selves. A confederation of voices is a useful construct since it refers to a group of events (such as constituted by my teaching and research) that are alike in a certain way and, in that same way, necessarily different from other events (such as the teaching and research of others). I am trying to show that:

> The way in which the events are alike is the self. That also makes the self an individual, differentiated from other individuals. The self ... can (then) be used as a thing, a datum, or an item in the context of a superordinate construct. (Kelly, 1955, p.131)

Even as my superordinate concern in this present paper is with teacher research and development, my self can be seen to consist of three or more voices, including the self I was in 1988, the self I am now, and the self I want to become-- all reaching out to future growth from the window of the present. Polkinghorne (1988) also depicts the self as a construction that is built upon our own and other people's observations. These projections are then integrated through narrative configurations as an expression of our unfolding story.

I could have told my story by also composing a letter to myself about my 1988 paper as if it were written by a trusted friend and colleague. Such a format ("Dear Pat, Your paper...") would have produced a second person, autobiographical narrative. Unlike the traditional, correspondence model of autobiography which tends to subordinate the text to that which it is presumably about (the author), the creation of text is primary in narrative. Narrative is literally a writing. Lejeune (1989) provides a textualizing construction of autobiography so that the content of a life (or professional) story is conceived of performatively. Eakin (in Lejeune, 1989, p. xxiii) also argues that:

> If the premise of autobiographical referentiality that we can move from knowledge of the text to knowledge of the self proves to be fiction, the text becomes paradoxically not less precious but more: in making the text the autobiographer constructs a self that would otherwise not exist.

Explored in text as a chorus, our distinctive voices define us and our knowledge. Self-analytical texts help us gain a deeper appreciation of our experience. However, it is not just writing in either the first, second or third person that makes the difference to the inquiry. It may be a question of an accepting presence, of finally "being at home-- of being comfortable with the inquiry" (Connelly, 1991).

This acceptance may be preceded by what Holly (1989) describes as two kinds of developmental distancing. These result from discovering inconsistencies and from discussing the conflicts and tensions that writing about our teaching inevitably brings. First, we delve more deeply into experience and explore its meaning from personal perspectives and second, we stand back to view experience and explore its meaning from third person or broader, less personal contexts. As I hope I can show, reflective writing and dialoguing with others help us become more aware of "the lenses that we wear and (of) the minds that we wheel in, of our life histories and the influences which have shaped our thinking" (Holly, 1989, p. 22). From such a point of view, narrative and its review by others (and ourselves) promotes growth

in the ways that we construe and experience the world of teacher education.

Self-reflexive and reflective writing complements published, formal writing to produce a series of both academic and personal voices that go beyond existing levels of development. As Shulman (1991. p. 394) argues, "differences in author, time, situation, purpose, perspective and argument (can) lead to often striking contrasts in portrayal and interpretation." Narrative permits us to articulate and clarify our understandings. The process involves the retrospective recognition of experience (or the inner life of meaning) that cannot know itself once and for all time at the moment of experience. Reflective writing strategies serve the educational function of transformation of perspective. The ambiguities and tensions in trying to balance and integrate experience produce gains in practice and in theorizing about it.

For Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), mistakes and distortions in inquiry are avoided not by trying to build a wall between the observer and the observed but by observing the observer self and so "bringing personal issues into consciousness" (p. 226). Since we are what we read and write and publish, more space needs to be provided for us as academics to read and write ourselves also as evolving personal texts. Autobiographical inquiry can render practice and research so authentically that the accounts will continue to resonate with more of our writers' voices. But how do we record and document such events?

After we have oriented ourselves among our academic and personal voices with all their separate and shared accents and have listened

for their distinctive characteristics, we need to introduce and interweave these meanings into the plane of our discourse without distorting or destroying any of them. The danger of trying to attend to a chorus of voices and then to provide for their multiple treatment is that in the end nothing may seem complete or conclusive. The variety of writings that is produced may seem to clash as in a Tower of Babel rather than to contribute to blended development. Yet, without avoiding the challenge and without reducing the reader to a state of confused passivity, our unravelling skein and its writing should be "as difficult as it has to be to deliver its message in full" (Jackson, 1990, p. 6). In telling the story of the stories that we are told by ourselves in our different voices, we must render the thing itself.

Conclusion

As Pessoa and Bakhtin (1981) showed, writing and reading, the creation and interpretation of text, provide a model for the study of teacher education and research. Thoughts, acts, and intentions can be viewed as examples of self-authoring that is always in process of becoming. Kozulin (1991) discussed Bakhtin as showing (like Pessoa) that the self as author is not a single fixed entity so much as a capacity or energy. In studying myself, I am learning to listen to and to orchestrate my developing community of third and first person voices, even as they cite each other. My 1988 paper, the present reflections on it, and readers' comments on them, have helped me to author myself more fully. I am encouraged to continue to write in

more narrative and less expository ways. Conversation between loose idiosyncratic sensing and tighter academic meanings promotes growth.

The "abyss from soul to soul" (Pessoa, 1991, p. xiii) and that which is within our separate aspects of self can be bridged when we write what only we can write-- and in our different voices. By "going public" with the personal, community can be extended to transcend dividedness. By becoming more present to one other through writing, each voice can redefine, call to, and awaken the others to reply. By embracing the interplay of contraries, Pessoa and Kelly (1955, p. 56) used their first and third person voices to show that:

> Not only ...(do) the words man (sic) uses give and hold the structure of his thought, but, more particularly, the names by which he calls himself give and hold the structure of his personality. Each invests (himself) with a particular kind of meaning.

Self, teaching and research are not givens but are constructed by each of us in community. Through writing, we turn "senseless" unknowns into meaningful subjects for further discussion. But even when self becomes our central text, the self who later reads the writing is different from the author self who originally wrote it. Gaining perspective on self and becoming aware of the possibilities that are within and without bring us closer to melding our authentic voices. Teacher education can be refigured as inquiry through self-research.

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